

# Christianity and Crisis

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## Ten Fateful Years

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

THIS little journal was founded ten years ago this month. The immediate occasion for its founding was the conviction of a group within the Protestant Churches of America that the Protestant faith in this country was inclined to too simple solutions for the complex problem of the political and economic order; that it failed to understand the depth of the peril incarnate in Nazi tyranny; and that its simple solutions frequently contributed to a very unchristian "neutralism," to an irresponsible isolationism which failed to measure the responsibilities of this powerful nation to the world community of nations.

Ten years have passed. In those years both the American nation and American Christians have learned many sober lessons from the hard realities of our age. But none of us could have foreseen the breadth and depth of the historical crisis in which we stand. One tyranny was vanquished; but another, more plausible in its appeal and more terrible in turning dreams of justice into nightmares of cruelty, has taken its place. The horrors of technical warfare culminated in the use of atomic weapons at the end of the last war. These atomic weapons are now at once the cause of our ultimate insecurity and of our immediate security. Mr. Churchill is probably right in affirming that our superiority in these weapons is the chief deterrent of a Russian venture to conquer Europe. That this should be so is a culminating irony of our era, which began with such proud hopes and now lives in such abject fears.

It is not the particular business of the Christian faith to measure historical probabilities, but rather to prepare men for all eventualities. Nevertheless we must measure the perils in which we stand as accurately as possible. An attitude of indifference toward the perils of the hour makes for irresponsibility; and irresponsibility is as reprehensible as hysteria. Our margins of safety are obviously much slimmer than a decade ago when the Nazi fury was at its worst. It is indefensible to regard historical

probabilities as inevitable; but the probabilities are ominous. The slightest miscalculation on either side could plunge the world into the dreaded conflict. Nevertheless there are still possibilities of escape from the catastrophe which must be exploited.

Perhaps the most unnerving aspect of the present situation lies in the fact that the "play" is now primarily in the hands of the opposition. The Soviets can overrun Europe at any time; and they could easily be tempted to a "now or never" adventure by the very policy of increasing the European defenses. The two powerful deterrents to such a venture are the fear of our atomic weapons and their economic weakness. Atomic weapons could presumably damage Russia more than she could damage us. There is another possibility that Russia will not attempt a direct challenge in Europe but will seek for other "soft spots" in the hope of increasing her gains without a war. The conquest of Iran and the acquisition of its oil might be such a venture.

In this situation many anxious men naturally suggest that it must be possible to relieve the world tension by making one more effort at an overall settlement with Russia. The possibility of such a settlement must not be ruled out. It might be possible, for instance, to find a formula which would guarantee that neither the West nor Russia could profit by the unification of a democratic Germany. But such an agreement is not likely. The Russians are not disposed to agree on any formula which would not, in effect, deliver Germany and Japan into the Soviet orbit by political penetration. Any agreement which contained this danger and which offered only future promises as a *quid pro quo*, would be rightly regarded as another "Munich."

The possibilities of agreement in the Orient are also minimal. Europe may be right in its belief that our failure to recognize the Chinese Government contributed to the present tragic situation in Asia. But it is also true that, after the Korean invasion, such recognition became politically and

strategically unfeasible. Yet it must not be ruled out as an ultimate possibility. Furthermore the demands which Communist China is making now must be weighed in the light of what peril they offer to the whole perimeter of our island defenses in the Pacific.

We must arrive, therefore, at the conclusion that a relaxation of the world tension by possible bargains is extremely difficult. The more solid chance of avoiding war still lies in achieving such a preponderance of political, moral and military strength that the Soviets would not risk an attack. It is when this possibility is explored that we begin to realize the full scope of American responsibilities and the great peril in which we stand because we have begun to falter in meeting them. We have suffered a grave loss of prestige in the world in recent months, not so much because of the reverses in Korea, but because we have reacted to the crisis emotionally rather than calmly, and with a bitter party spirit rather than unitedly. Behind some of our partisan rivalries there are errors which have a special significance from a Christian standpoint. The two alternative policies which are proposed in opposition to the present course are typical of the two sins which Christian thought defines as sloth and as pride. On the one hand we are counseled to disavow the responsibilities of our power and use it only for our own safety. Mr. Hoover suggests that we renounce commitments we have made as leaders in the free world in order to make this hemisphere safe against the foe. Actually there is little safety in such isolationism; for it would make Communism a gift of the European continent, with all of its human and technical resources. It would undo all that has been painfully accomplished in the most creative achievement of American foreign policy, the European Recovery Program. The very suggestion of such a policy has aroused Europe's sleeping suspicions of American isolationism. The Continent has always been fearful, lest we revert to the old pattern of American policy which consisted of fitful, rather than continuous, exercise of responsibility. The Hoover Plan would mean playing traitor to the inchoate world community of nations and standing before the world in an unashamed disloyalty to a partnership which history had developed.

The other alternative involves a proud overestimate of our resources, even as Hoover's proposals imply a craven negation of them. This alternative is to carry the war into Asia, seeking by a military alliance with the Chinese Nationalists to reconquer China. This proposal rests upon a serious miscalculation of the military and moral resources of the Chinese Nationalists, obscuring their deficiencies by the theory that they failed because we offered inade-

quate support. But it implies an even more serious miscalculation of our own moral resources in Asia. It assumes that there is, in Asia, as in Europe, a clear line between Communist and non-Communist sentiment and that the non-Communists look to us with admiration and respect. The error in judgment is prompted, in part at least, by an idolatrous conception of the perfection of American democracy and its appeal to other peoples. Asia is not enamored of Communism, even if does not fully understand its perils. But it is certainly not convinced that our so-called "free" world is the paragon of virtue which we suppose it to be. Its judgments of our achievements may be as faulty as our own, since envy may distort the vision as surely as arrogance corrupts it.

The fact is that we labor under great moral handicaps in Asia. We are the white world; and a colored continent has not forgotten the long history of the white man's arrogance. Our boasted living standards do not recommend our civilization to poverty stricken Asia. On the contrary Asians frequently regard the disparity between our wealth and their poverty as proof of the Communist theory that capitalist exploitation is, alone, responsible for all inequalities of wealth and poverty. Even our genuine democratic freedoms offer no great attraction to Asia, which lacks both the spiritual and the socioeconomic presuppositions for their achievement or enjoyment. It is barely possible that the whole of Asia, with the possible exception of the island perimeter still related to the West, will be inundated by Communism. This does not mean that Communism would be good for Asia, as some Europeans seem to suggest. It merely means that neither we nor Asia had the resources of statesmanship to develop a viable economic and political system for the Asian world, which is absolutely safe against Communism. The widely held contemporary judgment that there is no middle ground between democracy and tyranny, has helped to lame our statesmanship in Asia. The fact is that democracy has been a possibility only in the technically proficient nations of recent history. In the history of mankind the vast agricultural societies of the past and present frequently enjoyed a "legitimate" government, under the rule of law; but they never achieved democracy. One of the ironies of history is that Communism, which was designed for the proletariat of the highly industrialized nations, has failed to win any considerable support in any of the moderately healthy democracies but has become the new religion of the landless poor of the agrarian world.

We need not accept the inundation of Asia by Communism as inevitable; but we would certainly be foolish to seek to arrest it primarily by military

power. For the exercise of military power in Asia, as anywhere else, will, if it is not based upon strong moral affinities and common loyalties, accentuate rather than assuage the Asians' fears, prejudices and resentments against us. Our failure to recognize these hazards to our position in Asia is undoubtedly due to our limited political imagination and to the idolatrous self-worship in which our American journals have indulged. This has resulted in a ridiculous exaltation of the "American way of life" as a kind of final norm of human existence.

The administration may be more right than its critics who want either to attempt too much or venture too little. It has nevertheless erred seriously in cultivating complacency in a situation of rising peril until the Korean disaster finally pricked the bubble of our ease in a catastrophic age. The administration lacked the courage to remind the American people that it is not possible to have a paradise of ease, suspended in a hell of global insecurity.

Politically and militarily we confront the necessity of developing an armed camp, with all of our economic and man-power resources partially, and possibly totally, mobilized. This will require a tremendous discipline particularly since the incentives of a total struggle will be lacking. It is also necessary to overcome the suspicions and mistrust of each other which have brought us to the point of annulling our liberties for the sake of achieving a coerced unity but losing a vital and creative sense of common purpose.

## II

What can the Christian churches contribute to the health and the power of survival of a free society? Perhaps they had better not try to make too many direct contributions. The Christian faith is not true to itself when it tries to reduce its validity to utilitarian proportions. We cannot, for instance mitigate the pride of a powerful nation if we cannot truly bring it under the judgment of a more ultimate majesty than the majesties of human contrivance. But that requires a religious faith, unmotivated by immediate political calculations. Our age has spawned idolatries of every kind, of which the Communist idolatry is the worst; but American self-worship is not the least harmful. Emancipated from every reverence toward Him "whose service is perfect freedom" the modern generation celebrated its brief hour of freedom and then capitulated to a variety of ridiculous tribal gods and political religions.

We cannot deal with the "jitters" which have overtaken our nation merely by warning against its dangerous consequences. These jitters are a part of the sickness of a whole culture which had forgotten that all human existence is insecure, that all human achievements are fragmentary and all human virtues ambiguous. A culture which has sought the mean-

ing of human existence in simple historical fulfillments is naturally at its wit's end, when contemporary history offers nothing but calculated risks, disappointed hopes and stern duties without hope of immediate reward. No political exigency can restore the nonchalance of a faith which declares with St. Paul: "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." Yet without such a faith the trials and burdens, the catastrophes and tragedies of our age will be unbearable. The crowning irony of our age consists precisely in the fact that the tragic aspects of human existence, man's sin and death, having been denied by our philosophies, express themselves in more terrible terms than in any previous period of history. We thought we had conquered death by our conquest of nature and now we face death in an undeniably social (moral) dimension. We are in peril of destroying each other.

The moral problems which confront us are nicely symbolized by the fact that the atomic weapons which give us immediate security against the outbreak of the war, can easily become, in the case of war, the means of our moral destruction. A Christian faith which declares that all of these horrible ambiguities would not exist if only we loved each other, is on exactly the same level as a secular idealism which insists that we could easily escape our predicament if only we organized a world government. A Christian faith which solemnly assures men, as did thousands of Christmas sermons recently, that peace can be had by "men of good will" but is unavailable if we lack good will, can drive us to as complete a despair as the despair which secular idealism is widely creating. Suppose we have good will but our opponent's fanatic fury is impervious to it? And suppose no amount of good will in us suffices to establish a transcendent ground above the tragic historical struggle? "If Christians were only sufficiently unselfish," declared a Christian moralist recently, "to be willing to sacrifice 'their' civilization as they ought to be willing to sacrifice 'their' life, we could quickly solve the problem of war."

In such terms Christian unselfishness requires that we capitulate to tyranny because democracy happens to be "ours" and tyranny is "theirs." Thus disloyalty and irresponsibility toward the treasures of an historic civilization becomes equated with Christian love. On the opposite extreme Christian moralists are ready to suppress every moral scruple because we are fighting for a "Christian" civilization against atheism. Neither type of moralism recognizes the moral ambiguity in all our historic responsibilities. There is no recognition in such versions of the Christian faith of the necessity of humility for the defenders of even a just cause and of the necessity of forgiveness and pardon for the "righteous" as well as the "unrighteous."



Politically we are at the end of an era because the democracy we have enjoyed is partly the fruit of the luxury of a remarkable prosperity which eased the problems of human togetherness in a technical civilization so much that we did not have to come to terms with some of the most vexing issues of justice and freedom. We have yet to prove, as Britain for instance has proved, that we can preserve both our freedom and our unity under the exactions and vexations of contracting, rather than expanding possibilities of life.

Religiously we are at the end of an era in which both Christians and secularists indulged in schemes of salvation, which regarded virtue as a simple possibility and hoped that historical destiny would be brought progressively under the control of an ever broader "good will." Now we know that we cannot do good without also doing evil; that we cannot defend what is dearest to us without running the risk of destroying what is even more precious than our life; that we cannot find moral peace in any of our virtues even as we can have no security in the ramports of our boasted civilization.

The whole human enterprise is morally more precarious than we realized, even as the achievements of our culture and civilization are physically more insecure. The faith and serenity which we must learn and practice amidst the insecurities and frustrations of the coming years are no different than the faith and courage which have always been necessary, even before insecurity and frustration were revealed as vividly as we now experience them. Men have never been able to complete any achievement or bring any life to a consistent conclusion. Our sufficiency has always been of God.

The humility and charity to which we must be prompted by the irony of guarding our security through the threat of weapons which could spell the moral degradation of the world, if we actually used them, must remind us how equivocal human righteousness has been in all human history. The simple moralistic answers to the problems of life had a brief currency in the heyday of the recent age. But the Christian faith has consistently asserted that good and evil are curiously mixed in all human achieve-

ments and enterprises. This is why every historic judgment must be charitably and humbly subjected to the "last judgment" which is not ours.

The awful consequences of atomic war must persuade us that the avoidance of war is still our primary responsibility. We may differ on how this is best accomplished. But there can be no difference in abjuring every calculation or hysteria which takes a world war for granted.

If war should come we would have to meet its problems and perils as best we can. But our business is to prevent it. Any policy which assumes its inevitability is blasphemous and obscures the limits of human knowledge and power. *The Manchester Guardian* recently declared that the basic difference between American and European viewpoints lay at this point. Europe hoped to avoid war, if possible, and America was inclined to speculate on how it could be won, assuming that it could not be avoided. We hope that this description is not accurate. We fear that it is partially correct. Insofar as it is correct it proves that Christian piety does not inform the political attitudes of America. If we were really informed by Gospel teachings we would stand in holy awe of the warning "woe unto that man by whom offense cometh."

### **New Zealand Churches to Unite**

Church union was uppermost in discussions for both the Annual Conference of the Methodist Church and for the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church which held simultaneous meetings in Wellington, New Zealand in December. The Methodist Conference recorded its support of union with the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches as "the will of God and of increasing urgency."

The Presbyterian General Assembly instructed its committee on union to meet representatives of the co-operating churches to formulate a common policy in union matters. The Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational Churches in New Zealand had voted favorably on a proposed basis of union three years ago but the majority was not considered sufficient to warrant proceeding to the final steps.—*Ecumenical Press Service*, Geneva.

## **Tenth Anniversary Issue**

With this issue *Christianity and Crisis* completes its tenth year of publication. We express our gratitude to our loyal readers, contributors, and supporters who have sustained us in our modest journalistic enterprise. We would be glad to have criticisms of the past, and suggestions for the future from our readers. We would also appreciate their support in extending the range of our constituency.

# The Christian Faith and Philosophy\*

DAVID E. ROBERTS

THIS remarkable book by an Anglican sociologist is to be brought out (by Scribners) in an American edition this year. The first part is devoted to a survey of the contributions made by Christians to the history of philosophy. Precisely because the author is not professionally a teacher of philosophy, he is able to avoid bogging down in the details of conventional scholarship and to appraise the development of Western thought with striking freshness. No writer can cover such a vast period in 150 pages without making statements about which there is bound to be considerable disagreement; but no essay of comparable length has dealt so effectively with this special topic, namely, the impact of Christian faith on philosophy.

Part I is intended, however, to be introductory and subsidiary to Part II in which the role and the problems of the Christian philosopher today are discussed. The major themes which emerge in the historical survey thus receive more systematic treatment in the latter portion of the volume. Three of these themes call for special mention. The first and most important is what Mr. Casserly calls "the Singular." He contends that the traditional categories of Greek logic were well-suited to express the nature of universals and of particulars, but not well-suited to express the nature of personality, which is neither a concept nor a thing. Another way of putting the same point is to say that classical metaphysics made room for timeless essences and physical facts, but not for history. Therefore the author suggests that when Christians, with their already-established faith in a personal God who reveals Himself in history, came to articulate their belief in philosophical terms they had to break through the limitations of Greek thought even though they of course used its categories. Two major alternatives emerged: First, the ontological (Augustinian) pathway, which begins with inward knowledge of selfhood-grounded-in-God, and tries to relate all knowledge and experience of external events to this center. Second, the cosmological (Thomist) pathway, which begins with external events, tries to move demonstratively to the existence of God, and then relates its philosophical conclusions to Christian revelation.

Although the author clearly favors the former alternative, he acknowledges his debt to Aquinas in connection with the second main theme, namely, the role of analogy. But Mr. Casserly uses the concept of analogy in a broad sense in arguing that it, rather than demonstration, should constitute the basic

method of metaphysics. He holds that unless reflection can presuppose a kinship between personality and the ground of Being, then particular correspondences between the structure of thought and the structure of reality cannot be drawn together into an interpretation that does justice to the heights and depths of human existence. In a word, metaphysics should be more like dramatic and historical writing than like mathematics.

The third major theme is the author's conviction that a proper approach to the problem of history (as opened up by Vico, Dilthey and Collingwood) can correct the errors of both traditional metaphysics and modern existentialism, and can thus make possible an integral unity between philosophy and Biblical faith. How he supports this conviction can hardly be explained here in detail. Suffice it to say that if metaphysics takes personal relations between God and man as the inner core of history, it ceases to be an abstract, rationalistic enterprise which is irreconcilable with Christian faith. And if the existentialist, having established the inwardness and decision of the subject as his starting-point, will then turn his attention outward to the interpretation of history, he will counteract the mistaken attempt to explain human events as due to nothing but the operation of impersonal or collective forces, and he will at the same time be rescued from his own special peril of eccentric subjectivism. Finally, if metaphysics thus becomes personalist and historicist, it will have no quarrel on principle with the Christian claim that God reveals Himself in history in a unique Person. If such a metaphysician remains anti-Christian, it must be on some ground other than the assertion that Christian faith in revelation is intrinsically irrational and unphilosophical.

Mr. Casserly's position is designed, among other things, to refute three influential contemporary movements: historical relativism, logical positivism, and—at the opposite pole—Barthianism. With regard to the first of these, he shows brilliantly that if relativism were strictly inescapable, it would make historical knowledge impossible. His discussion of logical positivism is less acute, but he does argue persuasively that the same theories which rule out metaphysics and theology also imply that poetry, drama, history-writing and much common speech cannot be "meaningful" communication. His main point against Barthianism is the assertion that philosophy can be the ally instead of the foe of revealed theology; in this connection he insists that if current skepticism can effectively undermine metaphysics, it can by the same means undermine the Biblical basis of theology.

\**The Christian in Philosophy*, by J. V. Langmead Casserly. Faber and Faber, London. 1949. 266 pp. 18 shillings.

Colleagues whose judgment I respect do not have as high an opinion as I do of this book. Admittedly, there are many facile generalizations, many threads left dangling, and many arbitrary twists of interpretation. But in my opinion, the merits of the book fully atone for its defects (however unprotestant this may sound). The author clearly sees where the crucial issues lie in secular philosophy, he takes seriously the importance of viewing them in their historical setting, he has an incisive understanding of what existentialism and Barthianism are about, and he sets out with animation and boldness to lay the foundations for a Christian philosophy that will be both traditional and modern in the best sense of each word. Until someone comes along who can do the same thing better, let me commend Mr. Casserly's book as one of the most promising of its kind to have appeared in many years.

## Correspondence

Dear Sir:

In Reinhold Niebuhr's editorial, "The Captive Churches" (November 13, 1950), he expressed concern over the fact that the resistance of the church against Communistic dictatorship in the satellite nations seems not to be as rigorous as was the resistance of the Christians to National Socialism in Germany. There may be many reasons for this. One reason, seems to me, to be that the pressure of the Communistic tyranny seems to

be more cruel than National Socialism. In Germany we frequently had the experience that Nazi Party leaders would actually yield before a vigorous and united resistance. Those who were timid often suffered more than those who were resolute. I could give many instances of this out of my personal experience in the churches of Kassel. The Nazi Party finally recognized that the church in Germany could not be conquered. I must admit that we do not know what would have happened if Hitler had won the war, for the fanatic Nazis used to say, "We will wait for our victory in the war and then we will condemn these pastors as traitors and execute them."

In any event, their lack of success after 1942 in the conduct of the war dampened party fanaticism. In addition we must consider that there were people within the party who, though they wore the party emblems, were not altogether loyal to its purposes. The tyranny of the Bolsheviks' dictatorship seems much more consistent. Certainly the complete isolation of the Communist Eastern World from the West is carried through much more rigorously. We know too little of what is happening in the struggles in the East. That may increase the impression that the resistance is less significant.

DR. D. JOHANNES STEINWEG.

Kassel, Germany.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** We have previously called attention to the fact that the editorial, "The Captive Churches," requires an amendment, calling attention to the fact that the most rigorous resistance on the part of the churches toward Communism is actually taking place in the Eastern Zone of Germany.

# The World Church: News and Notes

## Report Shanghai Christians Form Anti-American Group

More than 400 representatives of Christian organizations were reported in Shanghai to have formed a group called "Shanghai Christian Associations Committee for Resisting American Aggression and Aiding Korea." They were said to have sent a telegram to Mao Tze-tung, head of the Chinese Communist regime, pledging him their support in the Korean campaign.

"We Chinese Christians," they said, "have joined enthusiastically in the great movement, to resist American imperialist aggression and to aid Korea, now spreading among the entire Chinese people. We assure you that we will follow your leadership and contribute whatever we have to defeat these imperialist provocations, safeguard world peace and the security of our country.

"We will also complete the reformation of the Chinese churches in the direction of self-government, self-propagation and self-support within the shortest possible time, so as to get rid of the American imperialists' misuse of Christianity as a means of carrying on their aggress-

sive conspiracy in China."

Meanwhile, Chinese Christian leaders are studying how decrees issued by the People's Central Government affect the activities of the churches and church institutions, such as schools and hospitals.

Under one government order, all enterprises in which American interests are involved were taken under "protective control" of the Communist regime, in retaliation against the American government's freezing of Chinese assets in the United States and its embargo of Chinese mainland ports.

Promulgated by Premier Chou En-lai, the decree provided for an inventory of American properties, which may not be transferred or disposed of without authorization of military and administrative commissions of the People's Government. It also calls for the freezing of American public and private bank deposits.

In another order, the Government Administrative Council adopted a recommendation by Deputy Premier Kuo Mo-jo that all American-subsidized religious organizations be urged to bring themselves "under the complete management of the Chinese believers," in accordance with the principle of "self-government, self-



support and self-propagation." The government promised to give all possible encouragement to this end.

At the same time, American subsidized mission hospitals, colleges, and other institutions will either be taken over by the government or be allowed to continue as private enterprises operated by Chinese personnel. The government promised to do its utmost to aid private institutions that need financial help.—*Religious News Service*.

### **Missionaries to China Expected to Withdraw**

Large scale withdrawals of American missionaries from China are in prospect this year, but should not be construed as the end of Christian work in that country, an official of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. declared as he made public the results of a comprehensive survey.

Dr. Rowland Cross, Far Eastern secretary of the Council's Division of Foreign Missions, said that "on the contrary the Chinese Christian Church shows remarkable signs of vigor and in some places its membership is on the increase."

The mission executive reported that two years ago the American Protestant mission enterprise, which began 120 years ago, was represented by more than 2,000 missionaries. Its property was valued at more than \$27,000,000 and the annual contributions from this country totaled approximately \$8,000,000.

In addition, he said, the American phase of Protestant missions included 13 colleges and universities worth \$12,000,000, and hundreds of primary and secondary schools; over 200 hospitals and hundreds of leprosariums, dispensaries, social and philanthropic institutions.

Of the 2,000 American Protestant missionaries, he said, only about 500 remained. Their impending withdrawal he attributed partially to restrictive measures imposed by the Communists "of which the freeze of American funds and the government's taking custody of American property are the most recent examples."

However, a more important reason, he said, has been the advice given by Chinese Christians to foreign missionaries. The Chinese now admit that the presence of Foreign missionaries, especially Americans, "might lead to undesirable consequences," he said.

In this connection, he pointed out that up to three weeks ago Chinese Christian leaders often expressed warm approval of the work being performed by foreign missionaries and voiced the hope that "their joint partnership" might continue.

The change in the attitude of Chinese Christians, he said, is reflected in the advice recently given by Methodist Bishop Z. T. Kaung of Peking to missionaries in his conference. "I regretfully advise you that in the interests of harmony it is best for you to apply for exit visas," the Bishop is quoted as saying.

The Bishop's letter, said officials in the Division of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Church, made it clear that "the continued presence of American missionaries might lead to unpleasant incidents."

Dr. Cross stressed that the Bishop's views, as well as

those of other Chinese Christian leaders, were based on the "fear of anti-foreign feeling getting out of hand, and not because they consider missionaries as detrimental to the Church."

### **French Pastor Criticizes Truman's 'Theology'**

Criticism of President Truman's "theology" was voiced in Paris by Pastor Albert Finet, editor of *Reforme*, French Protestant weekly, in an open letter to Americans, intended to "explain the ideas and misconceptions of Europeans with regard to Americans, and vice versa."

Pastor Finet's letter was prompted by a pre-Christmas speech in which President Truman told newspaper men at a luncheon in Kansas City, Mo., that his efforts to organize the moral forces of the world, including Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Greek Catholics, Moslems and Hindus had made "some progress."

"We do not understand Mr. Truman's theology," Pastor Finet wrote. "We do not understand that extraordinary mumbo-jumbo of the Gospel, spiritualism and the rights of man which jumbles up in one basket the Dalilama, Ramakrishna, Niebuhr, and the Pope, and wants to mobilize them all in a crusade."

"It is no doubt very touching at the end of a banquet, but it is deplorable. It is particularly regrettable as there are very evident affinities between French and American Protestants, sentiments of affection and gratitude which are astonished, irritated and discouraged by these politico-religious phantasmagoria."

Pastor Finet also criticized American emphasis upon material values.

"We do not understand," he said, "how a democracy called Christian can give in its assessment of fundamental values primary importance to material wealth and power."—*Religious News Service*

### **New Russian Dictionary Hits at Bible, Religion**

What loyal Communists are expected to know and believe about the Bible and religion is summed up in a new Russian dictionary issued recently by the Soviet State Publishing House in Moscow.

The dictionary contains explanations—all strictly materialistic—for 20,000 foreign words and phrases.

"The Bible," it says, "is a collection of fantastic legends without any scientific support. It is full of dark hints, historical mistakes and contradictions. It serves as a factor for gaining power and subjugating the unknown nations."

A much longer explanation is given of the word, "religion." The definition says:

"Religion is a fantastic faith in gods, angels and spirits. It is a faith without any scientific foundations. Religion is being supported and maintained by the reactionary circles. It serves for the subjugation of the working people and for building up the power of the exploiting bourgeois classes."

"The liquidation of the bourgeois society and the advent of the Communist system has destroyed the foundations of religion, and is putting laws of the natural

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sciences in place of the cunning lies which are being advertised by all religions.

"The superstition of outlived religion has been surmounted by the Communist education of the working class, by its active participation in the construction of the free, socialistic life, and by its deep knowledge of the scientifically profound teachings of Marx-Leninism."—*Religious News Service*.

### Dissenters Increase In Norway

Membership in religious groups outside the Norwegian State Lutheran Church jumped from 90,000 to 120,000 in the past two decades, according to the 1950 public census returns released from Oslo.

During the 20 years that dissenters increased 33 per cent, the general population grew by only 12 per cent, the government statistics showed. Since 1930, the ratio of dissenters to the whole population has risen from 32.5 to 38 per thousand. In 1875 the ratio was four per thousand.—*Religious News Service*.

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### Christianity Reported Underground in Baltic States

Christianity has gone underground in the Baltic States as the result of ten years of Soviet occupation, according to reports received in Vienna by the Austrian Catholic news agency from its correspondent in Helsinki, Finland.

The report dealt mainly with Estonia, where, they said, the Communist regime has "destroyed the last religious freedoms and deported or imprisoned all clergymen and laymen who had the courage to resist totalitarian measures."

Religious life in Estonia, which is predominantly a Lutheran country, is being maintained "only in an underground manner" and by "the most fearless," the reports stated.

They said religious courses in the schools have been banned and students are being indoctrinated in atheism and materialism by Communist-trained teachers. The Christian holidays have been abolished and even observance of the sabbath has been proscribed as "not in the interests of the working people."

Part of the Soviet policy in Estonia has been to silence or remove church leaders who fail to show a "proper attitude" toward the regime and replace them by men of more "progressive" views, the reports said.—*Religious News Service*.

### German Church Endorses Mediation Plan

A proposal that Bishop Otto Dibelius of Berlin act as mediator for a meeting between top-ranking East and West German statesmen was endorsed by the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKID), at a regular session held in Potsdam.

The Council said it welcomed Bishop Dibelius' willingness to bring German political leaders together at his residence for East-West talks.

Such an act of mediation was recently proposed by an unidentified "high-ranking personality of the Evangelical Church" in *Die Kirche*, weekly organ of the Evangelical Church of Berlin and Brandenburg.

Bishop Dibelius, who is chairman of the EKID council, subsequently said that he would "place himself at the disposal of all endeavors which might contribute toward restoring German unity which all of us so urgently desire."

Besides the general national and international situation, the EKID sessions in this Soviet Zone city were devoted to discussions of budget questions and a reorganization of Hilfswerk, German Protestant relief agency.

With Bishop Dibelius presiding, the meeting was attended by all Council members except vice-chairman Dr. Hans Lilje, Lutheran Bishop of Hannover, who was ill. Among those present were Dr. Martin Niemoeller, Dr. Gustav Heinemann, president of the EKID Synod, and Dr. Hans Meiser, Lutheran Bishop of Bavaria.—*Religious News Service*.

### Author in This Issue

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